

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /076 W
-----240857Z 066566 /13

R 231005Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3970
INFO RUSBTA/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 4014
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR BG CE
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA VISITS BANGLADESH

REF: COLOMBO 0929

1. WILLIAM GOPALLAWA, PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA, MARCH 22
CONCLUDED A SIX-DAY STATE VISIT TO BANGLADESH. THE
GOODWILL TOUR WAS THE SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT'S FIRST VISIT
TO BANGLADESH, AND IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A HEAD OF
STATE HAD VISITED BANGLADESH SINCE THE ASSASSINATION OF
SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN IN AUGUST, 1975.

2. THE VISIT WAS ESSENTIALLY CEREMONIAL. NO TRADE OR
CULTURAL TREATIES WERE SIGNED AND NO SUBSTANTIVE BILATERAL
ISSUES WERE PUBLICIZED. DURING A WELCOMING BANQUET
MARCH 18 GIVEN BY PRESIDENT SAYEM, ONLY A FEW REFERENCES
WERE MADE TO REGIONAL ISSUES. SAYEM DECLARED THAT "OUR
PEOPLE ARE DETERMINED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF ECONOMIC
INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE. WE HAVE PERSISTED IN THIS
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COURSE DESPITE THE DISRUPTION CAUSED AMONG THE PEOPLE
IN OUR BORDER AREAS AND THE HARDSHIP WE HAVE FACED ON
ACCOUNT OF THE DIVERSION OF THE WATERS OF THE RIVER GANGES."
SAYEM SAID ALSO THAT BANGLADESH HAS SUPPORTED THE UN RESOLUTION
ON DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE,
BUT THAT "WE FEEL THE STATES IN THE REGION SHOULD FIRST
PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH AND RENOUNCE THE USE OF OR THE

THREAT TO USE FORCE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER." IN HIS REMARKS, COPALLAWA EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION OF BANGLADESH SUPPORT FOR SRI LANKA'S INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE. GOPALLAWA WAS ALSO PLEASED THAT BANGLADESH SUPPORTED THE SRI LANKAN CALL AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT FOR A THRID WORLD BANK. HE CONCLUDED BY PRAISING THE CLOSE FRIENDSHIP AND GOOD WILL THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

3. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED MARCH 22 AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT DID NOT DEAL WITH SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES EXCEPT TO STATE THAT BOTH PRESIDENTS, IN AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO FARAKKA, STRESSED "THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES EXERCISE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY AND FULL CONTROL OVER THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES." THE TOW PRESIDENTS ALSO REAFFIRMED THEIR BELIEF IN THE ULTIMATE VALUE OF NON-ALIGNMENT AND THEIR MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR DECLARING THE INDIAN OCEAN A ZONE OF PEACE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE COMMUNIQUE, THE PRESIDENT OF BANLADESH ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO VISIT SRI LANKA.

4. EDITORIAL REACTION HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY FAVORABLE TO THE VISIT. TYPICAL OF THE SENTIMENTS WAS THAT EXPRESSED BY THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER: "AS A NEWLY-EMERGED SOVEREIGN INDEPENDENT COUNTRSGN BANGLADESH HAS PROBLEMS REQUIRING IT TO LOOK FOR THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR LIKE SRI LANKA WITH ITS TRADITIONAL RESPECT FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS."

5. COMMENT: THE BDG APPEARED TO MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO WELCOME GOPALLAWA, THE VISIT SEEMED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AS AN EXPRESSION OF MUTUAL GOODWILL, AND THE BDG NO DOUBT APPRECIATED THE PRAISE IT RECEIVED FROM GOPALLAWA. AS THIS WAS A CEREMONIAL VISIT FROM A COUNTRY ANXIOUS TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOR INDIA, BANGLADESH'S SPECIFIC BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITH INDIA WERE NOT EXTENSIVELY PUBLICIZED.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOODWILL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Format: TEL
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ISecure: 1
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TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, BG, CE, (GOPALLAWA, WILLIAM)
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